

Glenna L. Matteson. Stepping out of Our Bubble: Developing Actively Diverse Collection Management Policies for Youth Literature. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. April, 2017. 56 pages. Advisor: Sandra Hughes-Hassell.

Collection development is at the core of library services. With growing awareness of diverse communities and the lack of diverse representation in literature and the publishing industry, it is essential that librarians create collection development policies that accurately and effectively advocate for diversity and representation within a library collection. This is especially imperative for youth librarians, who are serving patrons going through a process of identity development and have the potential to be deeply harmed by inaccurate portrayal of their communities.

This study examined how librarians can use collection development policies and ongoing education to curate diverse collections. The study consisted of four semi-structured interviews with librarians and professionals in fields of children's literature, some of whom are also members of marginalized populations, exploring topics of diverse literature, specific factors librarians should be aware of, and the language participants would like to see explicitly addressed in collection development policies.

Headings:

Library collection development policies

Children's libraries—Book selection

Diversity and inclusion

STEPPING OUT OF OUR BUBBLE: DEVELOPING ACTIVELY DIVERSE
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICIES FOR YOUTH LITERATURE.

by
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Introduction

The first thing a layperson thinks of when they think of a library, and librarians, is books. While the role of a library has changed over time, our dedication to the actual books within our walls remains an integral part of the services we provide. With that idea in mind, however, we must continually ensure that the selection of library books meets the criteria of not only the library's policies, goals, and missions, but professional standards as well.

Librarians are currently having the long-overdue conversation of how to ensure that books are representative and diversely varied. Research on media representation is disturbing in that representations in media do not accurately reflect the demographics of the audience they are reaching. This is particularly true in children's and young adult literature; the vast majority of books published are by white individuals about white characters (Park "Picture This"). Similarly, there is a noticeable lack of representation in other aspects of inclusivity and equity: LGBTQIA and the language in which books are written, for example (Park "Picture This").

This lack of representation presents a number of problems. Notably, research shows that youth who do not see themselves regularly reflected in media have lower levels of self-efficacy, which in turn influences development, confidence, and academic accomplishments (Aydin 54).

Along with these troubling statistics, is the tendency of librarians to feel that we independently know how to solve these problems. This admirable trait of perceiving

problems and working to fix them can become a detriment in that none of us can truly embody perspectives other than our own, on our own. Therefore, we must call upon another time-honored trait of librarianship to allay this problem: collaboration and communication. When the stakes are this high, when the stakes are the health and well-being of youth, then we must consult and yield to the perspectives of marginalized communities in order to achieve a more successful and inclusive library and collection.

This study begins that consultation. Its intended purpose is to talk to experts in the fields of librarianship, children's literature, and accurate representation of diverse communities, with the purpose of exploring specific language and strategies all librarians, libraries, and collection development policies can employ in order to advocate for an accurate, reflective, diverse collection.

Literature Review

Identity and Self-Efficacy through Childhood and Adolescent Development

When talking about literature for children and young adults, it is important to first look at child and adolescent development. More than any other genre, children's and young adult literature should be grounded in relation to development. Childhood and adolescence is, in general terms, primarily an age of self-discovery. Children learn how to interact with the world around them and begin to notice that there is a world beyond what they see and understand. This exploration is initially sensory and then develops more cognitively (Gilmore). As children age, they begin engaging with peers and adults with more empathy and an understanding that their actions affect others and vice versa. Children are concerned with understanding their physical place in the world. Additionally, children begin to understand physical differences between human beings quite early in life, and begin to attempt to build their own understandings of why those differences may be (Aukerman, "Children's Perceptions of Their Reading Ability"). Pre-teens, or "tweens," begin to question that outside world and go through intense internal struggle to understand who they are as an individual, within their families and their peer groups. A shift occurs from valuing the opinions of parents to prioritizing the opinions of peers. Tweens are fiercely independent, but also often feel troubled about leaving the comfort of their family. This "in between" stage is considered hard to categorize because tweens have oftentimes-contradictory features of both childhood and adolescence. However, this stage indicates that an individual is transitioning to thinking

more abstractly and with more depth than is to be expected in childhood. Silliness and emotional immaturity are still to be expected, but what is most important to remember is that tweens want to think deeper and be taken seriously (Strom, “Teamwork Evaluation by Middle Grade Students in Inclusive Classrooms”).

Teenagers, or young adults, are going through the process of establishing themselves definitively as unique individuals. Identity, which is continually formed at every stage, starts to solidify a bit more as individuals transition more and more into adulthood. Adolescence is a period of immense, continual change. Throughout that change, factors have been determined that allow for positive growth and exploration of self. The 40 Developmental Assets model describes factors that contribute to positive growth for adolescents. Not all of these factors may be present in each teens’ life, but the number of assets present in a teen’s life is positively correlated to success and satisfaction of that teen (Search Institute, “Forty Developmental Assets”).

One factor that is important to focus on is the concept of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as “one’s belief in one’s ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task.” One’s sense of self-efficacy is linked to tangible success and accomplishments, in the personal, professional, and academic sphere (Aydin).

The primary reason, in this paper, that it is important to understand the value of self-efficacy is its link to representation in media and literature. Children’s and young adult literature is linked to identity development and subsequently self-efficacy (Cakar). If children see representations of themselves in a consistently negative manner, this may translate into a negative self-image, which subsequently leads to a decrease in self-efficacy. Representation has real-world ramifications.

Issues of Equity

In order to understand the importance of an inclusive collection development policy, the importance of equity must be established. For the context of this paper, I will be using Paul Gorski's definition of equity and social justice: "purposeful attention to issues of inequality." ("Equity Literacy for All.") Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie gave a TED Talk in 2009 that she titled "The Danger of a Single Story." Adichie notes that a failure to imagine the world complexly diminishes the world around us and ourselves. When we engage with and indulge stereotypes, we believe that there is a "single story," a single narrative that defines and explains different people and especially different groups of people (Adichie, "Danger of a Single Story"). Those single stories are wrong and simplistic. Adichie explains, and subsequently is at the root of the fight for equity, that fighting against the single story narrative means allowing diverse and complex narratives about all people to be written, expressed, and heard (Christensen, "Danger of a Single Story").

Foundationally, it is an expressly stated purpose and professional value to the American Library Association that libraries and librarians make note of social inequities and explicitly work to counteract those inequities. Disparities between the dominant narrative and marginalized groups/voices are tangible and harmful. "I'm invisible, but also hyper visible," a student of color notes (Gorski, "Equity Literacy for All.") These inequalities have noted consequences. A distinct lack of self-efficacy is seen. Marginalized groups are considered "endangered" in academic and educational settings, as well as in the pages of literature (Christensen, "Danger of a Single Story."). Self-esteem and self-efficacy are connected to racial identity, as well as identity as a whole.

Oftentimes minority races are called to think about their race constantly, in explicit and implicit ways (“How Racial Identity Affects Performance”). Additionally, cross-cultural misunderstandings have negative implications, particularly for the marginalized (“Cultural Competence: A Primer for Beginners”).

Therefore, it is necessary to engage in a conversation about how libraries can support and foster equity. Patricia Overall notes that such practices are necessary to meet “the growing population of diverse library users.” (Overall, “Cultural Competence: A Conceptual Framework for Library and Information Science Professionals”). Cultural competence can be defined as the “ability of professionals to understand the needs of diverse populations” (Overall). Equity is rising to the challenge of meeting those needs. To have cultural competence and engage in equity means creating sustainable advocacy versus a “boom and bust” cycle of reactions.

Problems in the Current Publishing Industry

Data collected by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC) as recently as February 2017 highlight the dearth of any books about or by racial minorities. Out of 3,400 books received by the CCBC, about 11% were about or by African Americans, 2% were about or by American Indians, 13% were about or by Asian Pacifics, and 8% were about or by Latin@s (CCBC). In interviews, the researchers expressed concern that these numbers appear to have leveled-off: the publishing community is not increasingly publishing more books by racial minorities. Rather, the numbers of books about or by racial minorities appears to have plateaued.

Furthermore, the number of books published **by** minorities is unacceptably small. David Huyck created a graphic that illustrates the diversity in children’s books based on

2015 statistics; this image is included in Appendix A. The image capitalizes on the research of the CCBC as well as the work of Rudine Sims Bishop, who asserted that literature acts as “windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors (Bishop, *Perspectives*).” As the graphic shows, white children have an abundance of mirrors in literature from which they see themselves reflected in. What they are lacking is windows and sliding glass doors that allow them to expand their perspectives to the experiences of other individuals who do not look like them. Distressingly, readers who are not white have an exceptionally small number of mirrors in literature from which to see themselves in. In fact, there are more books focused on inanimate objects and animals than there are books about any characters of color.

Lee and Low Books published a survey based on data collected in 2015 that looks at the diversity in publishing staff. They found that overwhelmingly, individuals in publishing are white, cisgender, straight women. This is comparable, Lee and Low notes, to the images most often seen in published books: white, cisgender, heteronormative stories. It should be noted that these statistics are similar within the library field itself (Roh, “Library publishing and diversity values”). This data is all telling the same story: publishers, librarians, and the books available to youth are overwhelmingly operating from a white, cisgender, heteronormative lens.

Collection Development and the Power of an Inclusive Collection

Issues of collection development become more complicated and serious when considering issues of equity. However, proper collection development is a necessary part of creating an inclusive, equitable library, particularly for youth services. Denise Agosto notes that diversifying a library collection makes youth more comfortable and welcomed

in a library, as well as facilitating student learning, due to the personal connections readers make with the texts (Agosto, “Bridging the Culture Gap”). Policy outlines of collection development policies note that it is important to consider a library’s patron base, in order to ensure that all members of the community are represented in the collection (“Collection Development policy guidelines for school library media programs”). However, diverse and inclusive literature also promotes empathy, understanding, and increased world perspective in readers that do not necessarily personally relate to the characters (Agosto, “The Cultured World”). For privileged students, inclusive literature allows them to expand and consider perspectives different from their own.

For underrepresented readers, diverse literature that is representative is largely absent, shown in data as recent as September 2016 (Park “Picture This). However, when diverse literature is used, research indicates that this has an immensely powerful impact on the readers whose life experiences are reflected in the text. When students read texts that are “reflective of the students’ rich and complex histories,” it allows them to come to a higher recognition of their own capacity (“Students Don’t Need Diverse Literature Just Because It’s Diverse”). Reading such literature promotes a sense of belonging as well. Practically, using diverse literature in the classroom promotes interest in learning and reading from students who previously found themselves unrepresented in text.

The flip side, however, to the positive effects of inclusive literature, is the negative ramifications of an absence of it. Historically and contemporarily, children’s and young adult literature has been found to be overwhelmingly white, or the persons of color characters are portrayed in a negative manner (Agosto & Hughes-Hassell, “The All-

White World of Middle School Genre Fiction”). The minimal representation that exists for youth of color and other marginalized groups is overwhelmingly negative. What they are seeing is the cruelest and unkindest portrayal of themselves and their culture, while simultaneously being inundated with a variety of representations of white youth and the dominant canon. “We’re still here,” one youth of color notes (Ching, “Multicultural Children’s Literature as an Instrument of Power”). That is not accurately reflected in the current state of children’s literature (Park, “Picture This”).

Collection Development Policies and their Role in the Library

Collecting based on diversity and reflecting that commitment in one’s policies is a professional standard, according to numerous documents and committees within the American Library Association. The importance of diverse collection is rooted in its impact upon the community, but it is also simply a professional standard. Adkins and Thompson note in their work that key documents used to guide library service focus on equitable public library service, including the need for such equity to be reflected in policies. It is imperative, they write, that librarians understand the importance of equity and use it as a guiding force in library service, particularly in library policies.

Denise Agosto notes that literature centered on marginalized groups should be examined through the terms of: accuracy, expertise, respect, purpose, and quality (Agosto, “Building a Multicultural School Library”). Contemporary diverse literature falls short of those marks, to the detriment of youth of color and all their peers. Such standards, Agosto goes on to say, should be reflected in a library’s policies.

Fought, Gahn, and Mills’ article “Promoting the Library Through the Collection Development Policy” discusses how libraries can utilize their policies as marketing tools

to communicate with the public. Policies can outline priorities for the library, as well as letting the community know what is important to the library. Pickett et al. advocate for using collection development policies as not only a way to assess the collection and plan for future collection, but also to communicate with patrons how the collection is ever changing and the patrons' roles in engaging with the collection.

Such articles highlight that a collection development policy should be used as a guide and a communication device. Agosto's work emphasizes the need for policies to reflect a priority of diversity and equity, with explicit standards for how to meet those goals.

Synthesis

These categories combined are indicative of several things. Identity and self-efficacy are key developmental needs in childhood adolescence. These qualities are measurably tied to representation in literature. Inaccurate representation of one's cultural or racial communities leads to negative self-image and a lowered sense of self-efficacy.

Additionally, there is evidence that this inaccurate representation is pervasive and ongoing. Diverse, inclusive representation in young adult and children's literature is severely lacking. This means that we are allowing children to be harmed by the current state of the literature that they come into contact with.

Lastly, collection development is an integral part of the field of librarianship, and professional standards demand that we consider diversity as a factor in our collections. The negative ramifications readers are experiencing as caused by current literature makes that goal even more important.

Methods

This study utilizes qualitative interviews with a select number of participants. Qualitative interviewing has the purpose of getting as in-depth as possible with an oftentimes small sample size. Rather than the fairly direct and simple approach of surveys, I wanted to understand the nuances at work in collection development and underrepresentation. Expert interviews naturally lend themselves to this topic (Leroy 210). My definition of an “expert” for the purposes of this paper, as defined below will be broad. However, due to the nature of the topics of collection development and representation in children’s literature, it is most important to have sources who are highly familiar with those topics.

I intended to use purposive sampling in order to gauge appropriate interview subjects. Interview participants were chosen because of expert knowledge in the topic area. These participants were chosen based on two criteria: their expertise in the areas of librarianship and children’s literature, and their interest/expertise in the area of inclusivity and equity. Special attention was given to experts who are members of the marginalized groups that they focus on; the purpose is to talk to members of those marginalized groups rather than experts with an “outside” lens.

I identified participants through personal connections, social media presence, and published works that focused on issues of equity and accurate representation of diverse populations, specifically in children’s and young adult literature. Participants ranged from librarians to members of the publishing and writing communities. Participants were

contacted through publicly available email addresses, and sent an inquiry email (see Appendix C) that outlined their rights as participants. They were informed of their rights to not answer any questions at any time or to end the interview for any reason. Two participants requested the interview questions be made available to them beforehand, which was sent to them. In total, two interviews took place over the phone and two took place in person, using a prepared interview guide that allowed for elaboration or discussion as needed (see Appendix B).

While I began with purposive sampling methods, this proved to be difficult. I sent out multiple inquiry emails with very few responses. Subsequently, snowball sampling was the more effective method and yielded more results. At the end of each interview, I asked participants if they would be willing to pass on my contact information and inquiry email to any professional contacts they felt would have insight into the topics we were discussing. In total, I conducted four interviews, all ranging in times from thirty minutes to an hour. With permission, I recorded each interview to have a specific record of the conversation as well as my own observations. Following each interview, I partially transcribed each interview and made notes of the pertinent details and quotations. Identifying information was removed and I created pseudonyms for each participant.

Following the interviews and transcription, I coded the data looking for similarities or differences in the participants' responses to the interview questions. Two of my participants were self-identified as being members of a privileged population and this provided further comparison: I looked at how the responses of each individual related to the other responses, but also how their experience of analyzing diverse literature varied based on their self-identified privileged statuses.

Responses were analyzed looking for tangible advice that could be used to guide librarians' collection development policies: why is diverse collection development important and what tangible steps can we take to ensure accurate collecting. These interviews allowed me to understand the deeply personal implications of accurate, diverse collection development and its impact on patrons.

Limitations

This study is an exploratory study intended to begin to look at not only the problems in current publishing, but also how librarians can establish policies for accurate collection development for diverse populations. The limited number of interviews and my focus on racial inequalities means that this study cannot, and does not, accurately address the representation issues in literature. This study does not fully cover the depth of inequalities in racial representation, as well as not touching upon other marginalized populations such as LGBTQIA+, differently abled populations, religious minorities, and the innumerable intersections of the parts that make up our identities. Furthermore, these responses cannot be extrapolated to be representative of all underserved populations, or of all youth librarians. This has impacts on the results of this study as well: further research is needed to ensure that the results are truly reflective and representative of all marginalized populations.

Additionally, these results are only focused on children's and young adult literature. Interview participants are experts in solely youth literature and librarianship, and these results cannot be extrapolated to be wholly relevant to adult services. The reason for focusing on youth literature is due to the nature of development and the import of identity formation in children and adolescents.

Definitions

Within the results, interview participants and myself used certain terms relating to diverse collection development and issues of equity. For the purposes of this paper, it is important to establish definitions of what we mean by those terms.

“Diverse--” media that is reflective and accurately representative of wider perspectives than merely the traditional canon (white, cisgender heteronormative lens)

“Marginalized--” communities, perspectives, or experiences that are historically and systematically overlooked or ignored.

“Privileged--” belonging to groups that are often given the benefit of the doubt, extensive opportunities, and who are systematically favored.

“Own voices--” authors who write from their own specific perspective or experiences. For example, a black author writing books with black main characters or plots exploring experiences related to being black.

Accurate vs. “Authentic”

In my first interview, I used the phrasing of “authentic representation,” which the interview participant, Donna, immediately corrected me on. “I try to shy away from that word,” she said. She went onto describe how she tries to use the word “accurate” instead of “authentic” because it is more precise. Throughout our interview, I wondered about this distinction and at the end of the interview, I asked her to clarify. She paused for a moment before giving an extensive answer.

“So I think that precision of what we’re talking about is very important, and with ‘accuracy’ we’re more able to talk with precision. Authentic: the way that I make fry bread is authentic to my family; the way that Joe’s family makes it is authentic to him. And both are true. It’s hard to articulate. Other ones that are similar to that is something a professor once told me: ‘It is not incorrect to say that 6 million people died in the Holocaust, but that’s not really accurate either.’ The proper

way to talk about that is that they were murdered. And so precision of language when we're talking about what is the best way to talk about a people is very important and I think 'authentic' is a little slippery."

In other words, authentic experiences can still reflect incorrect information or perspectives. Using such vocabulary can give an incorrect impression that all experiences have equal weight. A privileged person's perspective in observing marginalized populations may be authentic, in that those perspectives are what the person experienced, but the perspective may not be accurate. In making this distinction, Donna is asserting that there are correct and incorrect ways of writing about marginalized populations.

This distinction between accurate and authentic stuck with me through the rest of my interviews. I asked another participant, Jacinta, what her thoughts on the distinction between the two terms. She became very thoughtful on the matter. She agreed with Donna's distinction, with her own personal reservations.

She {own voices reviewer} has the right to call things accurate. I would never use that term. I could never, you know, watch *Moonlight* and say, "oh that's really accurate." I would never feel comfortable using that word. You say "authentic," I think I say "authentic" only when describing own voices. Like I would call a voice authentic, but I don't think I would ever use it to describe literature, to say "authentic literature."

This distinction between answers is telling. Donna, as a member of a marginalized group, has authority to discern an accurate portrayal. Jacinta, as a member of a privileged group, feels like she should yield to the authority of marginalized people to determine what books contain accurate portrayals.

It is important to note that "accurate" does not mean "singular experience." Oftentimes "authentic" is used to describe the diverse experiences that exist within any populations, including marginalized groups. However, Donna's point is that there are unequivocally wrong ways of portraying marginalized perspectives. There are multiple

correct, accurate ways to portray marginalized perspectives in literature. Using the term “authentic” over “accurate” fails to properly address the fact that there are wholly incorrect ways of marginalized portrayal.

Results

Between January 15 and March 20, I conducted four semi-structured interviews with individuals with a depth of knowledge in diverse collection development. Two of the subjects self-identified as being members of racial minorities, and the other two self-identified as members of privileged racial groups who worked with diverse student populations. My first interview was with an educator who I will call “Donna.” Donna has worked in the field of children’s literature for over twenty years and is an active member of the Nambe tribe of Northern New Mexico. My second interview was with a literacy coach I will call “Kelsey.” Kelsey is a literacy coach with previous experience as a school librarian. She is an enrolled member of the Sappony tribe. My third interview was with a school librarian, “Jacinta.” Jacinta works as a middle school librarian with a largely African-American and Latin@ population. My last interview was with a school librarian “Amy.” Amy works as a school media specialist at a large, diverse high school. Both Jacinta and Amy identify as white.

Interview questions focused on three wide subjects: the current state of literature, what specifics librarians should look for when assessing works, and what language should be incorporated into library collection development policies. Six themes emerged from the interview. Each will be discussed below.

Importance of Diverse Representation

The first question in the interview focused on establishing the subject’s background in the areas of diverse literature and collection development, if any. Subjects

described their education and work experience, but answers also tended to become deeply personal, indicating that the importance of diverse representation is internalized and associated with self-identity and the identity of others. Donna answered immediately that her experience began with her “pride as a Native person:”

“All of this stuff that you’re asking me about is grounded in who I am as a person, which is a proudly enrolled member of Nambe Pueblo and someone who has always had pride in who I am, who we are, and knowledge of what we do and what that means. So in each move that I’ve made as a human being... I became steadily aware of different kinds of Native people... and I also became aware of the ways Native people in history were misrepresented everywhere, so I’ve been pushing back on that kind of thing for a long time.”

Donna’s instinctive answer highlights the impact of diverse representation, both positive and negative. At its best, diverse representation emboldens pride. At its worst, inaccurate representation can damage the pride and self-confidence of readers.

Kelsey too touched upon diverse representation and its real-life implications. She discussed how it influenced her own experience as a Native woman, and that the consequences of literature that is focused on Native Americans has broad implications for readers of such books, particularly Native American youth. She addressed her frustration that people do not understand that real lives are being affected by the inappropriate and inaccurate portrayals in literature:

“Part of that problem is identity. That identity for Native American youth, and adults, is negatively affected to a high degree by books that portray incorrect and inaccurate stereotypes, you know, images of American Indians that they themselves don’t recognize. That kind of assaults their truth about themselves, daily, and I think that does play a big part in achievement in schools. It also plays a role in all sorts of other statistics... identity is huge in the American Indian communities.”

Kelsey went on to remark that such stereotypical portrayals, “seems like its normal until you realize that it’s real people these books affect.” This concept of *real people* being

affected in negative ways is two-fold: inaccurate representation in literature hurts the people it is trying to portray and it also hurts the readers who see that portrayal.

Specifically, it harms students and youth who identify with characters who are being portrayed stereotypically or falsely.

Jacinta and Amy both highlighted that it is crucial to have diverse literature that matches the population librarians are working with. Both stated that while diverse literature is important for all readers, it is especially crucial for marginalized students. It is important to get to know your student body, and to build a collection with your patrons in mind:

“They should be aware of their own population! Not just the demographics, but what they’re interested in. I think you have to absorb that pop culture. It’s right there. And they want to talk about it. Population first, but I think pop culture is so important... and try to connect that to what’s in books as well. Honestly, there is not a middle grade or young adult book written with a Latin@ main character that I would not buy, unless it was poorly reviewed by a Latin@ reviewer. My population is 80% students of color, and every year it’s getting more and more Latin@ students. I feel like my collection of books, I do a good job, but there are just not enough Latin@ books. There’s not enough.”

Jacinta also encouraged librarians to understand their communities deeply, to see the importance of diverse representation: “I would point out that, you know, it’s not just about racial and ethnic diversity.” It is important to collect diversely and widely in multiple different facets. Jacinta noted that her collection should reflect her student (patron) population, but also their interests. As Kelsey noted above, identity is deeply important to Native American youth, as well as youth of all ages. Diverse collecting is important because not only should your collection reflect your patrons, but their interests as well. Identity is, for many youth, a key area of interest.

Amy stated the importance of diverse representation simply by saying “these are your students.” The implication of such a statement is that diverse representation is simply what is needed to match a diverse population.

Problems in Current Publishing

In each of the four interviews I conducted, each participant stated that current publishing was not meeting the needs of audiences. Publishers are simply not focused on diversity, the participants agreed. Moving on to questions about how librarians can collect with accurate, diverse representation in mind, the responses included the caveat that current publishing is not sufficient.

In addition to the perceived lack in accurate diverse literature, several participants noted that what is being written often falls into one specific category. That is to say, frequently books written from a specific marginalized perspective are focused on the same issues and contain the same elements. For example, a disproportionate number of books by and about African-Americans and blacks are realistic fiction, set in urban locations. While these stories are important, it is also critical to have diversity across genres. Amy said, “I think it’s easy to just get one type of book, and some are just more available, I think.” The publishing industry, as it stands now, appears to focus on the “single story.”

When asked what problems she believes are facing current publishing practices, Donna sighed deeply before responding “They just don’t care:”

“They don’t care. I think they really don’t care. I was working with Native writers since the mid-90s...and before me there were other people... my point is there’s a lot of resources that people just aren’t picking them up and they aren’t thinking it’s important that books not misrepresent Native people. So I don’t know if it’s a lack of care but I know for a fact that they want stuff that’s going to sell.”

Donna went on to discuss that besides a perceived sense of apathy in the publishing community, she believes that publishers are only interested in a certain “type” of story. Any type of marginalized narrative that does not have specific traits-- determined by privileged individuals outside of the marginalized community-- is rejected or asked to be edited to include those elements:

“I have Native writers coming and telling me, ‘They want me to insert drums or dancing or feathers.’ It *has* to be what the mainstream notion of Native people are and if it’s not there then it’s not a ‘real’ native story and it just won’t sell.”

Donna went onto remark that “Feathered Indians on horses by their teepees sell.” Nothing outside of that narrative is being picked up by the publishing industry.

Participants also noted that publishing is simply not seeking out “own voices” authors and reviewers. “I would say there’s not enough books, there’s not enough books written by own voices authors,” said Jacinta. Other participants agreed that it was not a lack of authors that was creating this problem, but rather that publishers are simply not pursuing or encouraging authors from marginalized populations. Amy elaborated and said, “I also think there’s misconceptions about that these ideas aren’t going to sell or they won’t be as popular as other stuff that’s coming out. I don’t think that’s true, though.”

These problems are equally seen in reviewing journals, interview participants believed. Jacinta and Amy touched upon the problem that many review sites rely upon privileged voices to review books that contain perspectives the reviewers have little personal context for. Thus, they are unable to accurately assess any stereotypes, factual errors, or misleading information these books may contain. Jacinta said, “I think they need training. They need training by people like Debbie Reese. To look at more than just

their own perspective... they have to get outside the bubble.” This means that reviewers must learn how to step outside their own perspective and look at books through a different lens, or cede to the experiences of other individuals who have the perspectives necessary to gauge whether books contain harmful inaccuracies or not.

Jacinta also advocated for youth to review books, because of their understanding of what appeals to them and their strong internal senses of identity: “I think we should have more kids review stuff. They can tell. Especially high schoolers, because they’re at that age of truly recognizing their identities.”

The problems facing the current publishing and reviewing industries is important to understand because it means that librarians, and subsequently patrons, are not getting adequate, reflective literature. There are not enough books that contain accurate, diverse perspectives and experiences. Furthermore, reviewing sites are given either problematic materials and simply do not have the education and experiences necessary to accurately gauge whether diverse books are accurate or not. Due to these problems, a librarian looking for diverse literature is likely to encounter inaccurate materials and believe that there are no problems, or simply not find diverse literature at all. The problems in the publishing and reviewing industries directly contribute to the problems and challenges librarians face in building an accurate and reflective collection.

Advice for Librarians: Good Signs

The next part of our conversations shifted to tangible factors that librarians and readers can look for in books that purport to have accurate diverse representation. In this way, these factors can be used to guide purchases to ensure that a collection is diverse, equitable, and representative. Donna focused on representation of indigenous people. A

key factor, Donna explained, was explicitly naming which tribe the author is writing about:

“I want to know if the book names a tribe, because part of the problem with knock offs and most of the ways Native Americans are depicted in books is that there’s no tribe there’s just one kind Indian and they wear big feathered headdresses and they all live in teepees and they used to hunt buffalo on the plains and it’s all in past tense and it all looks like that, when the reality is over 567 federally recognized tribes and they’re all different. So, the specific information about whatever tribe is being depicted is important. That they name it, somewhere.”

This crucial factor is indicative of either personal investment or a substantial amount of accurate research, on the part of the author.

Donna also focused on the accuracy of content and the importance of present-tense language being used to talk about Native characters. She described how she is able to talk about Native authors using present-tense language and how it provides a learning opportunity for students:

“And then another piece that’s important to me is that if it’s a Native author, I can take that and really run with it in terms of presenting it to teachers and students...I’ll talk about the author and say ‘he is this’ or ‘she is learning that’ and then transition to: ‘You’ll notice I’m using the word ‘is?’’ That’s an important word. ‘Is’ and ‘are’ bring Native people out of the long ago faraway context and into the present. Because most children’s books {about Native Americans} have past tense settings and verbs. So when there’s a Native writer, we can use present tense words. Even if the book isn’t about Native people at all!”

It is an important learning opportunity for students to understand that Native Americans exist in the present-day. Librarians should note if books only feature marginalized communities in a specific context, within their collection. This could be a warning sign that a collection is not truly reflective of communities. As noted above, participants believe that the publishing industry focuses on a “single story” of marginalized populations. Librarians should be aware of this factor, and look for diverse experiences from marginalized perspectives.

Donna and Kelsey also encouraged librarians not to ignore good books merely because they were a bit older. Oftentimes, Donna noted, books are weeded because they are several years old. Many books that contain accurate portrayals of diverse populations, Kelsey said, are a bit older and librarians should not shy away from keeping them on the shelves. Older, more accurate books are preferable to new, stereotypical ones.

Kelsey pointed me towards local resources that librarians and educators can use to guide purchases. These resources have lists of already-reviewed books (both books recommended and not recommended for purchase), as well as questions to guide librarians in their own assessment of works. These resources are included in Appendix D. The problems in both publishing and the reviewing industries were a key factor in many participants also recommending smaller, content specific blogs, publishers, review sites as resources for librarians, to gauge whether or not a diverse book is appropriate to add to their collection. The resources recommended by participants is included in Appendix D.

Jacinta stressed that reviews from blogs and sources focused on diverse literature were key, as well as social media buzz. She noted that in our current dearth of diverse literature, it is incredibly rare for a diverse title to get reviews and discussion in mainstream reviewing tools. It is therefore incredibly important, Jacinta stressed, to cultivate following people with diverse and varied perspectives, to help ensure that you are seeing accurate reviews and knowing what books are being positively and negatively reviewed:

“{Librarians} have to be on social media. Your professional learning network should match your student population. I mean there’s just certain people you have to follow. And then when you start following those people, they lead you to other great people.”

Such communities and conversations that take place on social media are an ongoing part of a librarian's professional development, Jacinta argued. We cannot, and should not, trust our own opinions and perspectives on all books, particularly when expansive social media networks and content-specific review sites and blogs exist. Librarians need to rely upon these resources to guide their purchases. As Jacinta said, when discussing "accuracy" vs. authenticity," she simply does not feel equipped to properly assess whether certain works are accurate. It is imperative to yield to individuals with the experiences and education necessary to make those distinctions.

Amy discussed how she looks for the development of characters to guide whether or not books are written equitably.

"So the first thing I look for is if they're {the author} a member of that community... and if they're not a member then I would look for evidence that they did some background research or that they consulted with people who are a part of that community and had them read it before they published it. I would look for characters being equally developed and solving their own problems and all of that. Especially if it's a book about characters with disabilities, I'd look to see that they're using 'people-first' language. I also find books more compelling if the story's not just about that particular identity... like LGBT characters, but it applies to other groups as well, if it's just about that issue, just focusing on that identity and there's nothing else in their world or in the story, which can sometimes be helpful, but you need to develop your characters more. And that you couldn't just replace the character with someone from a different background and it be the same story, that just doesn't seem genuine."

Kelsey and Jacinta also had advice for how librarians can assess whether their collection as a whole is representative and diverse. Kelsey implored that out of all the books that claim Native representation that at least 80% come from Native authors: "I would like to see the language that says 'shoot for 80% of Native authors.' There are phenomenal books and we just aren't using them. What are you using to find them?"

Similarly, Jacinta discussed how she attempts to make sure her collection reflects her student body: “My ultimate goal for my library is, if I have 80% students of color, then my library should have 80% characters of color. Is that possible now? I feel like I’m getting there.” Even though her own collection is not “there” yet, Jacinta noted the importance of having a collection that at least attempts to match your patrons demographically. When I mentioned this thought to Amy, she stated that she believed such language should be included in collection development policies, as an overarching goal of a collection.

Donna and Kelsey also had overarching advice for librarians: research. She encouraged librarians to learn all they could about local Native tribes and their history. This is imperative for assessing works that have the potential to directly impact your own community. Moreover, in time, they both said, by researching and reading Native works, librarians will see the warning signs. Donna advised that librarians pick a tribe, preferably one within their community and learn everything they can about that tribe:

“In short become an expert in one particular tribe. And once you do that and then you pick up a book that has that content, you will know it’s not right. And gradually you will develop a radar of sorts that helps you find similar problems across other nations because some problems happen for all nations.”

This focus on education aspect, the idea that librarians should engage in continual ongoing education about different communities is fundamental.

Advice for Librarians and Reviewers: Bad Signs

I also asked participants to list some of the negative signs librarians should look for when reading books, to assess for accurate content. Kelsey discussed that a

“fascination” with marginalized people on the part of the author sets off warning bells for her:

“Is the author Native? Are they writing from an own voices perspective? Because if they don’t... usually they are stereotypical portrayals. So if you can find out who the author is, that kind of cuts out about 90% of the books about Indians. Things that non-natives say that put up red flags to me are things like if they’ve always been fascinated by Indians, if they’ve always related to Indians, always been attracted to Indians. That can possibly lead to inaccurate portrayal. A lot of times they get their facts right. They look at the history and they get the dates correct but then the overlay of that, the world building of that still has a condescending outlook, it still has a Eurocentric perspective on it.”

Jacinta noted that she tends to rely on feedback from the communities that diverse books are trying to represent. This is where librarians should rely on a strongly cultivated list of social media sources. Jacinta commented that oftentimes she does not feel personally equipped to gauge whether or not a book is accurately representing a marginalized population, as she is not personally a member of those marginalized groups. Subsequently, she looks for feedback from the community in question: “I always search out an own voices review source.” Jacinta also mentioned that given the resources that exist today, it is hard to miss negative reviews of books with diverse representation: “Someone has reviewed it. Because the sad thing is, there just aren’t that many books. There just aren’t that many books that come out with main characters of color. So, someone has reviewed it.”

Amy focused on the treatment of marginalized characters. If they are simply used as tokens or are less-developed than privileged characters, this is a warning sign. She also remarked that she looks for marginalized characters to have fully developed and nuanced storylines that do not merely focus on the character’s “diverse” traits:

“So warning signs would be obviously stereotypes without any complexity or nuance added to them, only historical representation which I feel happens a lot to

American Indians, and then obviously simplistic one-sided characters or characters only as side characters. I feel like this may happen more often in picture books, but if it feels like a book is positioning the reader as white, like taking on an outsider perspective, which is not a good sign.”

Kelsey heavily focused on the education of both the publishers and of the librarians that are collecting. “I think the biggest challenge is their own mindset,” she said. She talked extensively about how most publishers, librarians, and educators simply cannot get past their own mindsets to see what is harmful in certain books, or to weed appropriately based on inaccurate materials.

Living in the area or having friends that are Indians, doesn’t necessarily mean you will get it right. You have to do a lot of self-educating to remove that colonial lens and look through the lens of a native person. That doesn’t mean what people think it means.... You may have some facts right and you may have been well intended, but intention doesn’t counteract consequences. And consequences are real for American Indian children who see themselves in that book as submissive. So that’s the things that i would think of as red flags or assessing who is writing the book.

Kelsey also discussed that the challenge of getting past one’s privileged mindset also leads to keeping books on the shelves that contain harmful portrayals of marginalized groups.

The mindset amongst media specialists who are wonderful people and consider themselves very proactive about diversity, yet I still run into the pushback of “Oh! I love that book!” and then they leave it on the shelf. ... They’re just not willing to understand that while you loved it and there may some redeeming parts to that book, the stereotypes and misconceptions in that book make it harmful to other people. So why keep it when there are perfectly good alternatives? It seems like they’re just not willing to understand.... or they don’t believe it enough to remove the book... I think the mindset of “keep every book and if you remove it it’s censorship” is the biggest challenge. Because it’s not censorship. It’s just getting it right because we haven’t gotten it right for 100 years.

How Collection Development Policies can be Used to Address purchasing Diverse Books

The final part of the interview focused on collection development policies and the language that can be used in them to ensure that librarians are adequately collecting

accurate and diverse materials. Participants focused on different types of issues and language they would like to see tangibly expressed in library collection development policies. Donna focused on purchasing from small publishers, buying older books if they are more accurate and making tough calls when getting rid of books:

“{Librarians} have to be willing to say ‘I know this is popular but it really misrepresents Native people... is there something in our collection development policy that I can use to get rid of that book?’ And if there isn’t then they need to bring that into the policy.”

Kelsey emphasized the need for purchased literature to be coming from a majority of own voices authors, as well as having a system in place to remove unacceptable material, similar to Donna’s points. She also expressed a desire to combine policies that contain specific criteria with ongoing education on the parts of the librarians. With simply the criteria in place, Kelsey reasoned, librarians will assume that the system takes care of itself and “they will think they’re okay.” This is problematic because:

They think it’s fine, while meanwhile I’m cringing. People are so steeped in the stereotypes that when they read it, it just doesn’t even register. Even the best meaning people, it just doesn’t even register. And that’s super scary.

Jacinta and Amy encouraged librarians to develop strategic plans to go hand-in-hand with collection development policies that outline goals and motivations for representative collections. Amy said:

I think most of the time there’s a statement in our selection criteria that we’re looking for diverse language, but having specific language and having some tangible goals that you can work towards is useful. I also think that making sure you’re addressing that diverse collection across genres and I think identifying specific goals based on your community would be helpful. So I think including data like that about your community is justification and it helps you build that tangible goal. I also think just putting those good indicators and bad indicators down explicitly in the plan.

Jacinta touched upon the points that other participants made, bluntly stating, “We’re not archives, right? If it’s not for today’s readers, then get rid of it. We made it a classic. We can unmake it a classic.” She went onto discuss the necessity of putting goals related to your community into a collection development plan:

It doesn’t have to be exact, but there really should be some sort of expectation that you are going to reflect your collection on your population. And I would list, not just relying on main review sources, but specifically own voices reviews. And own voices literature.

Advice for Librarians Facing Pushback in Communities

Hand in hand with collection development policies, are library policies that discuss how to handle complaints about library materials. I asked participants what advice they would pass on to librarians who are receiving criticism for focusing on developing a diverse and representative collection. Donna cited Junot Diaz who said “Motherfuckers will read a book that’s one third Elvish, but put two sentences in Spanish and they [white people] think we’re taking over,” in that she believes in the ludicrousness of such criticisms and remarked, “there are no aliens in the community, there are no hobbits in the community! I think these little ways are very cute and effective.” These anecdotal, humorous answers, Donna reasons, are an effective way, in the moment to respond to push back from the community.

Jacinta encouraged librarians to utilize the data and research available on the importance of a diverse collection, if a librarian is facing pushback from their administration. She encouraged librarians to stand up for the students in their patron population and to recognize that such pushback may be irrelevant.

I would say to use the research, use the data. And I would say to find other libraries that have diversified their collection. And I would say, unless it’s from

an administrator, who cares about pushback? Right? Who cares? They're not the kids you're serving.

Jacinta's point gets at the fact that librarians need to focus on their patron base and advocate for their diverse collection development. Complaints are scary and oftentimes intimidating, but Jacinta reminded librarians to focus on the data and the patrons such work is helping.

Participants agreed that this language should be included in collection development policies themselves. Such guidelines would bolster librarians as well as providing them a roadmap as to how to go about creating a diverse collection and defending it if necessary.

Discussion

There was overwhelming agreement that current published works, library collections, and library policies are not up to par. Children's and young adult literature that attempts to portray marginalized perspectives is insufficient in a number of ways. First, there is simply not enough. Referring back to the graphic in Appendix A, it was apparent, before conducting the interviews that the majority of literature is written from the white dominant perspective. However, these interviews also reinforced that there are other problems with the marginalized perspectives that do get published. These perspectives oftentimes reinforce stereotypes, or are still depicted from a white-dominant lens.

Interviews also emphasized that literature has a deep impact on its readers, particularly in shaping the identity of the readers. Donna and Kelsey's passion for accurate and diverse Native literature comes from their personal pride as Native persons. This perspective was absent from my interviews with the participants who were members of privileged groups. This internalized motivation, and perspective, is of the utmost importance. Not only to Donna's and Kelsey's work personally, but also because their perspectives on how librarians can react and respond to diverse literature is deeply rooted in their own perspectives and their focus on its impact on readers like themselves. This internalized motivation is unsurprising, and yet inspiring to see. It guides their work, perspectives, and opinions. Jacinta and Amy both said that when questioning the veracity of works purporting to have diverse representation, they trust the perspectives of

individuals with that internal motivation and understanding over their own. Therefore, content specific blogs and review sites are crucial in giving librarians access to the perspectives that are necessary to assess diverse works.

How Librarians are Capable of Doing the Necessary Work

One important aspect that I was pleasantly surprised to see emerge was the belief that any librarian can assess any work for accuracies or inaccurate portrayal. Both Donna and Kelsey strongly reinforced that with a good amount of practice and strategic education, any librarian or educator, regardless of background and experience, can become attuned to problematic literature. This does, as Kelsey described, take a significant amount of time. Amy also touched upon the issue of time in her responses, stating that she believes it is a struggle librarians face. Finding the time to properly educate yourself and collect accordingly is time-consuming, but highly necessary.

This education also lifts the burden that is oftentimes placed upon educators, and all members, of marginalized communities. Donna and Kelsey discussed their frustration at being asked to weigh in on representation issues simply because of their Native background. Donna discussed her frustration in being asked to do so when people simply want to see or hear a Native perspective that matches the stereotypes they have in their minds. Kelsey focused on the fact that many educators rely on her judgment instead of simply educating themselves or drawing upon resources that already exist.

To better foster the self-education process, as well as guiding librarians, myself included, in beginning the work of assessing a collection based on accuracy and diversity, I have developed the following brief guides for use in collection development policies. They pull together the points made by interview participants and put them into tangible

questions that can be used as a guide to determine whether or not a book is acceptable for purchase or removal from the collection. These are simply a starting point, based on the points raised in the interviews I conducted. They need more perspectives to be added and as Kelsey stated, such language needs to go hand-in-hand with ongoing self-education of librarians in issues of equity and diversity.

Recommended Language to be Added to Collection Development Policies/Guides

For Diverse Books being Considered for Purchase

Question	Yes	No (problematic, consider not purchasing)
Is the author a member of the marginalized community they are writing about?		
Does the book use “present tense” language, indicating that marginalized communities and people are real, present, and ongoing?		
Do characters who belong to marginalized communities have fully developed characterization and plotlines?		
Does the book contain specific language and details relating to the people the book claims to represent?		
Do the characters who belong to marginalized communities have agency? Are they solving the problems portrayed in the narrative?		
Have content specific blogs/reviewing sites written by members of the marginalized community given favorable reviews?		

This guide can be used to help librarians look at a book’s characteristics before adding it to the collection. It gives a few key points, mentioned in interviews that librarians can easily check for in a book itself. Most importantly, it asks librarians to seek

out content-specific blogs and reviews, written by members of marginalized communities, that will have the expertise to recognize if a book's representation is problematic.

For Books Already in the Collection

Question	Yes (problematic, consider weeding)	No
Does the book contain outdated language or stereotypes?		
Does the book only use past-tense language to describe marginalized communities?		
Have content specific blogs/reviewing sites given negative reviews?		
Are marginalized characters tokenized, or given less-than-full characterization or storylines?		
Does the book contain inaccurate language or information?		
Are we keeping this book because we consider it a "classic?" What are our justifications of this?		

Many participants said that the biggest problem they believe facing librarians who want to build a diverse collection is their "own mindsets." As Jacinta said, "We made it a classic and we can unmake it a classic!" This guide begins the process of looking at materials that have harmful and inaccurate representation. It again asks librarians to look for reviews and advice from members of the communities that these books claim to represent. Moreover, it specifically asks librarians to explain **why** a harmful "classic" should remain on the shelves.

To Consider Assessing the Collection as a Whole

Question	Yes	No (if no, how will we fix this problem?)
Do the demographics of your collection match, or attempt to match, the demographics of the community?		
For books that claim marginalized representation: does the collection have a majority of authors who are members of those marginalized populations?		
Is the collection reflect diversity and equity across genres?		
Within collections that claim diversity: is one identity or community portrayed within specific confines in the majority of the collection?		
Are we collecting from diverse publishing houses?		
Are we consulting with local and national content-specific resources to guide our purchases?		

Overarching Questions to Consider when Writing Collection Development Policies-- include these goals and resources in the policy itself
What are our goals for our collection?
What tangible needs do we see and how do we intend to meet them? What is our time frame?
What are our local content-specific resources that we can draw upon and collaborate with?
What is our professional development to foster ongoing education on issues of diversity and representation?

These overarching questions should be used to guide the creation of collection development guides and strategic plans. They ask librarians to consider setting specific

goals, related to their community, for their collection, as well as goals for their own ongoing education and cultural competencies. It also asks librarians to seek out local resources to guide them in these goals and ongoing education.

Points to Consider Adding to Complaint Policy

- As backed up by research and the experiences of real live people, stereotypical, “single story” literature is harmful
- The importance of a diverse collection is that it acts as “windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors (Bishop, *Perspectives*).” It is our goal to have a collection that acts as such for all of our patrons.
- We are committed to a collection that contains accurate representation of our diverse community and world.

These guides are not groundbreaking, nor do they contain revolutionary points. Nevertheless, they do reflect the need for tangible elements, research, and goals to be reflected in collection development policies. Interview participants agreed that it was not enough to simply state in collection development policies that libraries collect based on diversity. Rather, there needs to be strategic language as to how to go about that process, why the process is necessary, and policies need to be paired with ongoing, constant education on the parts of librarians.

These policies can be integrated into the collection development policies of school libraries as well as youth services departments of public libraries. Further research is needed into adult literature, its diversity, and most importantly, discussion with members of marginalized communities and their perspectives on such issues.

Many of the participants mentioned specific resources that all librarians can draw upon to educate themselves on issues of reflective literature, which goes hand in hand with updated collection development policies. To further the ongoing education of librarians, I have also compiled a bibliography of resources mentioned by interview participants that librarians can draw upon. This bibliography can be found in Appendix D. These resources are merely a starting point, but they are a necessary one.

Librarians Need to, and Can, Accommodate for the Problems in the Publishing Industry

The overwhelming consensus was that while current publishing offerings were woefully incomplete, there are many steps that librarians can take to ensure that their collection is diverse, accurate, and reflective. Opinions on the main problems in developing such a collection were a bit more mixed. Responses ranged from librarians not having enough time to search out adequate literature to librarians having to break out of their own mindset in order to excel at the task. These are challenges, to be sure. However, participants also stressed the importance of endeavoring in this work. Patrons of all ages, and students, are directly impacted by the literature they come into contact with.

While librarians do have pressing needs on their time and budgets, committing to ongoing education and ensuring that they are culturally competent means that librarians are capable of serving their diverse populations. The challenges are great, but the work is deeply necessary and absolutely possible to achieve.

It is also important to note that one of the biggest challenges facing librarians, as mentioned by Kelsey and Jacinta, is that librarians need to get out of their own mindsets in order to do this work. It is impossible for any one individual to be able to properly

assess all works of literature based on accurate, reflective diversity. Ongoing professional development ensures that librarians understand why it is important to lift up marginalized voices, how to do so properly, including providing librarians with the tools to help them develop personal skills and resources to help them in this goal.

Conclusion

This introductory study highlighted the need for critical language to be added to collection development policies to guide librarians in their purchasing. Not only do we need to assess each work that we consider adding to or keeping in our collection, it is necessary to assess our collection as a whole, so that it is diverse and reflective across genres and our collection as a whole.

Such work has tangible effects on our patrons, particularly our youth patrons, particularly our youth patrons who are part of marginalized populations. In order to meet the needs of our diverse patron communities, it is imperative that our policies and our professional development reflects an understanding of our communities, and a need to shift out of our own perspectives in order to best serve.

The guides developed through the research of this paper should simply serve as starting points. More work needs to be done to include marginalized voices into our collections, but also in the development of our policies, especially collection development policies. Language specifying that we prioritize diversity in our collections is inadequate. It is imperative that we explicitly develop how we will prioritize diversity and how we will achieve our collection goals. The first step to doing so, is including more marginalized voices and committing to “stepping out of our own bubble.”

Appendix A

Diversity in Children's Books 2015

Percentages of books depicting characters from diverse backgrounds. Based on the 2015 publishing statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison. ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pstats.asp



0.9%
American
Indians/
First Nations

2.4%
Latinx

3.3%
Asian Pacifics/
Asian Pacific
Americans

7.6%
African/
African
Americans

12.5%*
Animals, Trucks, etc.

73.3%**
White

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* About a quarter of the total children's books published in 2015 were picture books, and about half of those depict non-human characters, like animals & trucks.

** The remainder depict white characters.

Appendix B

Interview Guide

This study is UNC IRB approved (IRB # 16-2692). You are free to end this interview at any time or not answer any questions you wish. With your permission, this interview will be recorded and transcribed, a copy of which will be given to you for your approval. To protect your identity and ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used in any publications or presentations that result from this study. Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. What is your knowledge and background in the area of youth literature?
2. Describe your involvement in advocating for diverse and representative library collections for youth.
3. What do you look for when assessing works to determine accuracy and authenticity of representation?
 - a. What or who are some positive indicators?
 - b. What or who are key warning signs?
4. What should librarians look for/be aware of, when working to develop a representative collection?
5. What do you believe are the biggest challenges facing librarians who are trying to build inclusive library collections that advocate for authentic and accurate representation of diverse communities?

6. What do you see as the biggest challenges facing the publishing industry regarding authentic and accurate representation of diverse communities?

SLJ has recently begun requiring that all book reviewers take training to ensure that they are reviewing books for accurate and authentic representation. Kirkus is requiring reviewers to identify the race/ethnicity to all characters. Booklist has expanded reviewers #ownvoices

7. What else would you recommend that professional review journals do to ensure that reviewers are prepared to accurately critique youth literature?
8. People from majority groups can review books-- how??

Collection development policies typically are used to guide librarian's purchases. While many contain vague references to representation of diverse points of view, they typically do not contain tangible steps to ensure resources purchased contain accurate representation of diverse communities.

9. What issues would you like to see explicitly addressed in collection development policies?
10. What language would you like to see used in written policies to address those issues?
11. In your dream world, what do you look for when weeding?

12. How do you think the issues you identified could be best addressed in collection development policies?
13. What resources would you recommend librarians, use for their purchases?
14. What advice would you give to librarians facing pushback on lifting up and prioritizing inclusive and representative literature?
 - a. Should that be in collection development policy?

Appendix C

Inquiry Email

Dear Colleague:

We are conducting interviews as part of a research study to increase our understanding of collection development and marginalized populations. As a librarian who works with youth, you are in an ideal position to give us valuable first hand information from your own perspective. We are simply trying to capture your thoughts and perspectives. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Completion of the phone or video interview should take approximately 1 hour.

You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and that the subject.

Your responses to the questions will be kept confidential. Each interview will be assigned a number code to help ensure that personal identifiers are not revealed during the analysis and write up of findings. No individual will be identified by name or identifying characteristics. All data and files will be password protected and protected in order to maintain confidentiality. The results will be part of my master's paper to fulfill the requirements of Master of Science in Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The only persons who will have access to these data are the investigators named on this message.

There are neither risks anticipated should you participate in this study, nor any anticipated benefits from being involved with it. There may be professional benefits from this study, since the information we obtain will be used to improve the field of youth library services. There is no cost to you or financial benefit for your participation.

If you are willing to participate please suggest a day and time that suits you and I'll do my best to be available. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

You may contact us with any questions at (505) 412-7020 or by email (gmatteso@live.unc.edu) or (smhughes@email.unc.edu).

All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board at (919) 966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu (IRB Study #16-2692).

Thank you for considering participation in this study. We hope that we can share your views with the greater professional community and use your responses to help shape recommendations for improving collection development services in the future.

Sincerely,

Glenna Matteson

MSLS Candidate, 2017

School of Information and Library Science UNC-Chapel Hill

Sandra Hughes-Hassell, Ph.D.

Professor

School of Information and Library Science UNC-Chapel Hill

Appendix D: Resources Recommended for Use by Participants

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